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### *The benefit of sanctified afflictions.*

Written by BENEVOLUS.

(Continued from page 432.)

III. **T**HE subjects of sanctified afflictions will find the grace of the gospel peculiarly endeared to them, and will strive to obey God's will in all things.

"Before I was afflicted," saith the Psalmist, "I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." Here we may observe that the pious Psalmist was led, by means of his afflictions, to love more than ever the book of God's grace, and to conform to it in his practice. Rom. v. "We glory in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." 2 Cor. i. 5, 9. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."

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The more deeply any are impressed with a sense of their sins, and of the divine justice in their punishment, the more fully convinced are they of the necessity of gospel grace, and the more clearly do they see the glory of the gospel plan of salvation. Seasons of suffering have often proved seasons of high enjoyment to the people of God. The patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and the primitive Christians in general, under their trials, were favored with abundant communications of divine grace; and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. We may observe at the present time, that those who appear to be true Christians shine brightest when in the furnace. To them Christ appears peculiarly precious, and they appear at times, to be cheerful, in giving up all things for his sake. They discover that they count not even their lives dear unto themselves, that they may finish their course with joy.

Christians, when under the rod, read the holy scriptures with special attention and uncommon engagedness, and manifest a strong relish for the truths contained in

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the inspired volume. They now feel that God's word is a light unto their feet and a lamp unto their paths, while passing through the darkness and temptations of the present world.

Psalms cxix. 50, 54. "This is my comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."—The Psalmist declares in the same Psalm, "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (verses 72, 103.) Afflictions are necessary to lead persons to understand many parts of the Bible, particularly those which relate to sufferings, and the divine support under them. Who understandeth like the good man under the rod, how tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope? Who understandeth like the patient sufferer how consolation aboundeth by Christ, as the fruit of chastisement. The best of men do not know how much they trust in themselves and in the world, until their attachment is tried and broken by the rod. Now they see more fully than ever their own folly in placing such confidence, in the things which perish. They will bless God for ever for that discipline which hath opened to them the pride and deceitfulness of their hearts, and hath brought them to discern the worth and glory of that kingdom, which cannot be moved. True Christians have rarely so clear evidence of their adoption as when their earthly hopes are dashed in pieces.

Sanctified afflictions lead men to be more attentive to the du-

ties which they owe to God and to each other. What a wide difference is there, in ordinary cases, between the prayers which are made in a day of adversity and those which are made in prosperous seasons? Those who feel themselves to be burdened with guilt and sorrow, and are convinced that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, will feel themselves engaged to go to the throne of grace, and to seek for mercy.

Prayer is not to them an unwelcome task, but is the delight of their souls. When they find Satan and their wicked hearts striving to throw hindrances in the way of the performance of this duty, they will not rest until they have, in some degree, obtained the victory, and can fervently pour out their hearts to God. He is pleased sometimes remarkably to fill their mouths with arguments, when all worldly appearances are against them, while they are bowing at his footstool. They are uncommonly assisted in praying for themselves, for their families and friends, for enemies, for the whole human race, and especially for the peace and prosperity of Zion.

It is painful to those who derive benefit from their afflictions to be deprived, by ill health, or other means, of attending on the worship and ordinances of God's house. These are objects for which they find an increasing relish as they are emptied from vessel to vessel, by their trying changes. Hence when they are excluded from the place which they love, they can adopt the language of David, when he was wandering in the wilderness of Judah, by the persecutions of Saul. "O God thou art my God; early will I

seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory as I have seen thee, in the sanctuary." (Ps. lxiii. 1, 2.)

Sanctified afflictions are instrumental of stirring up persons to a faithful discharge of the duties of the second table of the law. There are two in particular, which I shall name. The first is the duty of administering just reproof. This duty can never be rightly performed without much self-denial. It is too common either to backbite those who do wrong, or to reprove them in anger. Both are forbidden by the word of God. We are bound to tell our neighbor, and especially a Christian brother, to his face, what we think amiss in his behavior, and to intermingle meekness with firmness. When we feel calm and tender, we hate to wound the feelings of another, but the spirit of the gospel requires us to reprove sin in others, whatever may be the consequences. A mind solemnized by prayer, and communion with God in other duties,—a mind which seeth the exceeding sinfulness of sin—and is bro't to the footstool by the rod, is prepared to administer reproof, without being overwhelmed with a slavish dread of the wrath of the offender, and to do it in a manner which is best suited to work a reformation. What boldness, and at the same time what meekness, did the prophets and apostles discover, in reproving the ungodly? and in attempting to pull out of the fire their near friends? We shall, according to our sphere of action, imitate them in some degree if we are governed by the same spirit. Nothing has a happier tendency to lead persons to

discharge this duty, and to come home to the conscience than enduring chastisement from the hand of our heavenly Father. His glory appears to them of such worth, and the souls of men are so tenderly loved, that they dare not be silent when called to speak in a way of warning and reproof. The other duty which I shall mention in this place is compassion and kindness to those who are afflicted. We are commanded to bear one another's burdens, to love as brethren, to be pitiful, and to be courteous.

There are men whose inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever and their dwelling places to all generations.—They are intoxicated with their prosperity, and presume that no painful changes await them. They look with contempt upon the needy and afflicted, and are disposed to charge them with bringing their troubles upon themselves, or continuing them by their imprudence or timidity. Job xii. 5, "He that is ready to slip with his feet, is as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease." The sons of carnal pleasure make their boast that they have kept themselves clear from the troubles which fall upon others, and say, "we shall never be reduced to their state, or if we should, we will soon extricate ourselves by our wisdom and fortitude. Let those poor wretches suffer, it is good enough for them, but as for us, we feel above submitting to the weakness and the dejection which they discover." O ye proud boasters, betray no longer such impious folly and madness, but remember that the days of adversity will come upon you like an armed man, and plunge you in misery!

Christianity speaks a very different language from that of the men of the world, Heb. xiii. 3. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Nothing teaches persons to feel for the children of sorrow like experience in the school of adversity. This eminently qualifies the followers of the compassionate Saviour, to sympathise with the afflicted, and to strive to lighten their woes. They extend their compassionate feelings to all who are under trouble, and especially to those, who are the friends of the great Redeemer. They will strive to relieve the wants of those who are needy, and to bind up the broken spirit. 2 Cor. i. 4. "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." They labor to turn the attention of their afflicted fellow mortals to the only sources of consolation, and to prepare them for deliverance in the present world, and immortal glory in the world to come. They can cheerfully welcome to their bosoms, the humble and patient disciples of the blessed Saviour; however much they are despised by the ungodly world. Knowing these to be the excellent of the earth, they are compassionate and kind to them for their Lord and Master's sake, and rejoice in the prospect of meeting them in the paradise above, where all sorrow and crying shall be done away.

The enemies of the primitive Christians remarked concerning them when they saw their strong mutual affection under their fiery trials, "Behold how these Chris-

tians love one another!" The disciples of Christ sometimes in the present world, fall out with each other, and give mutual wounds. But joint sufferings have always been found to check their animosities and to unite them in the closer bonds of affection. When such are the fruits of our afflictions we have not been smitten in vain, but shall derive peace and comfort from them in this world; and shall receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come.

IV. Sanctified afflictions are instrumental in weaning men from earthly attachments, and in ripening them for death and heaven. The pious Patriarchs confessed themselves amidst their troubles to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth and to be looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The primitive Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Knowing that they had in heaven, a better and an enduring substance.

Pious persons who have suffered many pains, and endured many outward losses and bereavements, look upon this world as being a very empty place, and not by any means worthy to be sought as a portion. While they give thanks to God, for the innumerable temporal deliverances and blessings which they have received, they dare not rest their hope of support and enjoyment on any thing beneath the skies.

They can discern no earthly prospect which has unadulterated charms; but every thing around them wears the appearance of decay and dissolution. They watch and they pray that they may not be ensnared by earthly allurements, and that they may be in constant readiness for the ap-

proaching change by death. The eternal world grows more and more familiar to their minds, and their thoughts are much employed on that state into which they are soon to enter. Many of their meditations are employed on death and on the future judgment. Although they cannot determine what their views will be, when they shall be called to walk thro' the dark valley, yet they believe that the end of the upright man, will be peace. They are much in prayer to God, that he would not forsake them in the hour of death, and believe that the only way in which divine consolation is then to be expected, is in a humble walk with God, and in the faithful discharge of every duty while life is continued. What a firm hope, and what animating prospects, were enjoyed by the apostle when he could declare, as in 2 Cor. v. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord!" How earnestly desirous was our apostle that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death? He could say as in Phill. i. "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor, yet what I shall choose, I wot (or know) not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better."

Let not Christians in general be discouraged because they have not risen to the attainments of the

apostle Paul. He was raised up for eminent usefulness in the church of God, and he did more to propagate christianity than any other mere man who hath ever lived. He suffered much in his labors to advance and defend the religion of the blessed Saviour. To use his own language, he was 'in deathsoft,' while he was travelling round the world, to proclaim the glad tidings of peace and pardon through a crucified Saviour. The followers of Christ, at large, have not been called to such services as was the apostle, nor to endure such trials as he endured, and therefore it is not strange, that their consolations should fall far below his. But remember, ye patient sufferers, that God is not unmindful of your labor of love, and that he is training you up to serve him better while on earth, and to enjoy a brighter crown in heaven. God will not break the bruised reed, and the smoking flax he will not quench. He heareth every sigh, and every breathing of the contrite heart; and will give you grace to persevere to the end of your days, and to come off conquerors, yea more than conquerors through him who hath loved you, and given himself to die for you.

We always find the most heavenly-minded Christians among those who have smarted most by the rod. To them meditations have become familiar on that glorious state in which the redeemed will be brought into the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb, and will unite with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with the holy angels in everlasting songs of praise. However far they may fall short of rapturous enjoyments in religion, while they see through a glass darkly, they discover a solidity and firmness in their exer-

cises, which manifest that their light is shining with increasing brightness unto the perfect day.

I have now endeavored to collect and bring into view some of the principal evidences of sanctified afflictions. Can we say in a review of our troubles, as the Psalmist did in a review of his, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Our afflictions have certainly had some effect upon us; either in rendering our hearts tender, and our lives obedient, or in hardening our hearts, and occasioning us to become more obstinate and open in the practice of wickedness than ever. If the last be the effect our case is alarming indeed, and we have much cause to fear that to us is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Let us recollect the marks or evidences of sanctified afflictions which have been brought into view, and impartially compare ourselves with them.

When any derive benefit from their afflictions they acknowledge and adore the hand of God in them; and they feel satisfied with the perfect government of the Most High. The subjects of sanctified afflictions are led to a clear discovery of their sins, and an unreserved confession of the divine justice, and wisdom in their chastisement. They examine their hearts and their past lives, and abhor themselves as being very vile in the eyes of infinite purity. They who are afflicted in covenant faithfulness, will find the grace of the gospel peculiarly endeared to them, and will strive to obey God's will in all things. They will prize and seek after communion with God in the various exercises of private and public worship. They will endeavor to

conform to the law of benevolence towards men; and in particular, will be emboldened to reprove sin, and be engaged to exercise compassion and kindness towards the afflicted. Sanctified afflictions are instrumental in weaning men from earthly attachments, and in ripening them for death and heaven.

These are very plain rules of trial, and such as must commend themselves to our minds. If we have sought to regard them in our practice when we have been in tribulation, we have found true peace; and can say with the Psalmist, "That it is good for us that we have been afflicted." Are there not some who can adopt this language, and find evidence that they are heirs of heaven? And may say in some happy moments with the Apostle, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us?" (Rom. viii. 18.) Let such maintain, at all times, a patient and a devout, a watchful and a heavenly temper. Their days of mourning will soon be ended, and they will soon be admitted into the world of everlasting light and joy.

How awful is the state of those who have become hardened in all their afflictions? What can such expect in the course which they are pursuing but everlasting misery? "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.) What cause is there to fear that all the evils which they have felt in the present world, are but so many presages of endless, vindictive wrath in the world to come? Let them be warned—let them be entreated, to search and try their ways and turn unto the Lord!

*The Christian's desire and prayer.*

ALL men have their desires : the real Christian has his, and is no less solicitous than others, to have them answered. He desires that sinners should repent and believe the gospel ; that saints should grow in love and faithfulness ; that Christ should be satisfied in seeing of the travail of his soul, in the prosperity of Zion, and that God should be glorified. These are things which engage his heart. But most men have desires which particularly respect themselves ; so has the Christian, and this desire is peculiar to him, and is worthy of particular notice. It may be thus expressed : *The people of God have no desires so great, and make no prayers so fervently, respecting themselves, as this, that God would rectify their hearts.* ' Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' The evidence of the truth asserted, will be seen and felt by the Christian reader, while he attends to the following considerations.

1. The people of God are deeply impressed with a sense of their depravity of heart, for they are sanctified but in part, while in this life ; they have a much greater sense of this, than others can have. Their sense of their own wickedness, and corruption, is greater than the impenitent sinner has, under the most powerful convictions, that he is capable of receiving, though not usually attended with such terror and malignity. The impenitent do not hate sin, and see its awful deformity, as the Christian does ; they dread most of all its fearful consequences, in the wrath which they apprehend it will bring upon them. But Christians have a mor-

al sense, by which they perceive the evil of sin, and its detestable nature, and cannot but abhor it, from a view of its native malignity : it offends their feelings, in the same way as filth and ugliness offend our natural senses ; and therefore it appears to them hateful, in a different sense, and to a far greater degree, than it can to any other men. They ' hate every evil and false way.' Besides ; In consequence of this sense of the deformity of sin, and the dishonor it casts on God, they have a quick discernment of it, and discover it in a thousand instances, which most of mankind account innocent things. This deformity they know to be sin, as readily as our eyes can distinguish ugliness from beauty : by this they are so furnished, that they can discover depravity in themselves, in a thousand instances, in which others would have no idea of guilt.

They also have a sense of holiness, and moral beauty, which others have not ; and this assists them more immediately to perceive the difference between holiness and depravity of heart, by a kind of spiritual discernment, much as we distinguish colors by our eyes. If sin were seen alone, it would lose half its deformity ; but believers seeing it in contrast with holiness, behold it in a just light, and it appears exceedingly sinful. And this moral sense, by which they more readily know both good and evil, helps them, by this contrast, to a quick discernment of sin, under almost any disguise it may assume. This moral sense is the anointing of the holy Ghost, and with this discernment and experience, how is it possible but that Christians, imperfect in this life, should be

sensible of it, and be deeply affected with the evil of it? And hence it comes to pass, that while the Pharisee congratulates himself before God on his goodness, the Christian scarce raises his eyes towards heaven, smites on his breast, and says, 'God be merciful to me a sinner : ' or like Job, when he had a glorious manifestation of the holiness of God, cries out, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

Further: The people of God are not unwilling to come to the light; but they look to God to search them, and try them: they watch their own hearts with diligence, that they may know themselves, and hence they continually detect their depravity, working in them 'against the law of their minds, bringing them into subjection to the law of sin.' This they find is in them at all times, in one shape or another. Sometimes they discover it in an improper regard to the things of this world, and a difficulty in resigning all to the divine disposal. Sometimes in an unspiritual and languid frame of mind towards God, so that they cannot be fervent in their devotions. Sometimes in the ease by which they suffer themselves to be surprised, and led astray by temptation, to neglect their duty and fall into sin. Sometimes by an uncomfortable dullness, and a kind of backwardness to engage in duty; and this they find operates respecting duties towards both God and man, and affects the devotions of the sanctuary and the closet. 'When they would do good, evil is present with them.' In all these things they well know that the blame is

not to be laid to times and circumstances, but to their own depravity of heart, which is the fountain from whence such corrupt streams flow. So that Christians are deeply impressed with a sense of their depravity, which is one thing necessary to make them earnest, that their hearts should be rectified.

2. This remaining depravity of heart is to the people of God their greatest burden. They cannot be indifferent towards that, which appears with such hideous deformity as sin, and so malignant in its nature. They abhor it wherever it appears, and are most sensibly affected, when they find it in themselves; and especially because it is always in them, and presents them on every serious reflection with the view of such a constant offence. Other things sometimes appear painful, and they may endure fiery trials; but this is a *constant burden*, and even under other afflictions, the discoveries of their own wickedness and untractableness, are often the bitterest ingredient in their cup. This is the cloud that separates them from beholding the glory of God, darkens their prospects, deprives them of much spiritual enjoyment, injures their usefulness, and makes them go mourning all the day long; and they know that it is this, they are not ignorant of the gall which gives bitterness to their souls. They know it is their own sin, and cry 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' And this also is necessary to render Christians earnest that their hearts should be rectified, viz. that they should feel their remaining depravity to be a grievous burden.

3. Believers feel sensible that a deliverance from this burden would give them the greatest relief of any thing which they can contemplate. It would be a relief, if they could be delivered from the various afflictions to which they are subject, in common with others, in this world; but it would be next to heaven itself to be delivered from wickedness of heart. This would so open their lips, that their mouths would show forth the praises of their Lord. And on this account they thank God, through Jesus Christ, that the blessed deliverance is approaching, and that when absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord, and shall be transformed into his image, and be like him when they see him as he is. The Christian knows that a clean heart would qualify him to enjoy sabbaths, ordinances, providences, to enjoy God, and enjoy himself in prayer, and in all duty and intercourse with his Maker and Redeemer. And a sense of the relief and enjoyment it would give, to be delivered from all wickedness of heart, is another thing calculated to render Christians earnest, that their hearts should be sanctified more and more.

4. That this is the Christian's greatest desire, respecting himself, may be evident to him, and to his most intimate acquaintance, to whom he unbosoms himself freely, by remarking how he strives, watches, and uses the instituted means of grace for this end. Could we look into the Christian's heart, and see all that passes there, and what his views are in using the means of grace, we should see, that as they respect himself, they are to have his heart sanctified, that he might be furnished the better to serve God, and his fellow men :

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for this he reads, hears, prays and meditates; calls himself to a frequent and strict account, and watches his own heart, out of which are the issues of life.

5. The people of God feel their dependance on him to cleanse and renew their hearts. They are fully sensible, by the word of God, and their own experience, that their object will never be attained, without the special influence of the holy Ghost, and that it is God, who must work in them, both to will and to do. They know that their depravity will baffle all their attempts to destroy it of themselves; they have learned that he, who trusteth in his own heart, is a fool, and they know where to apply, and whence alone they can receive an abundant relief. This is calculated to lead them to be earnest in prayer, that God would sanctify their hearts.

6. And that Christians do thus earnestly apply unto God, with greater importunity for this, than for any other blessings upon themselves, must be evident from the things already noticed, and from considering attentively the prayers of the people of God for themselves, which are recorded in the bible. The words already mentioned, 'Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me,' may be considered as a specimen of the numerous prayers of David on this subject. Our Lord teaches us to pray, saying, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' It was his own prayer for his disciples, 'Sanctify them thro' thy truth.' 'And this is the will of God, even our sanctification.' The object of Christ in coming into the world was 'to save his people from their sins,' and this is the

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special office work of the holy Ghost. From all we have considered, it appears, that it is, and ought to be the greatest desire, and most fervent prayer of the people of God, respecting themselves, that God would rectify their hearts.

The considerations we have been led to notice, may impress this idea upon the attentive reader, that if he has ordinarily any desires respecting himself, greater than deliverance from sin, and growth in grace, he is yet a stranger to real christianity. Some readers perhaps well know, that they are really more anxious for some temporal concerns—the support and credit of themselves and families, than for eminence in holiness, and the comforts of a pious family; but alas they know not what they do.

There is another description of people, who are indeed anxious to be saved from the wrath to come; they are convinced that wrath is inseparably connected with continuance in sin, and on this account, they dread it, and earnestly desire a deliverance from it. But there is a wide difference between this, and a direct abhorrence of sin itself, as being hateful and odious, and the most that their conduct proves, is that they are not altogether stupid in their sins. Let me close with an address to truly pious readers. You are seriously impressed with a sense of the greatness of your depravity, you love holiness, and long and strive and pray for perfection in it; nothing respecting yourselves, so greatly interests your hearts and calls forth your exertions; and because you are sometimes almost ready to sink under the burden of sin, and the small proficiency you make in

grace, let me lead you to some encouraging considerations.—Consider what God has already done for you, in giving you this moral sense, by which you see the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness, and in making sin a burden to you, and leading you so earnestly to desire a clean heart. This is a great mercy, and when you consider that so much is already done for you, it furnishes you with much encouragement to confidence in God; you have in this tasted that the Lord is good. Consider also, that your labors for sanctification are not vain, but are the necessary, and appointed means of your proficiency in holiness; and give all diligence to make you calling and election sure.—Consider further, the covenant engagements and faithfulness of God.—And finally, be encouraged to work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, by the supporting consideration, that it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do.

#### EPIPOTHESIS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

*Thoughts on Luke xxii. 22.*

“And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined of him; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.”

THESE are the words of the Lord Jesus on that solemn night, in which he was betrayed into the hands of sinners. While he was eating the last passover with his disciples, he informed them, that he was about to be betrayed and put to death, and that even one of them would be guilty of

this vile treachery. But to support his real friends under this peculiar and distressing trial, he tells them, that the "Son of man goeth, as it was determined of him;" teaching them, that however dark and painful this event might appear, yet it had been before determined in the divine counsels, and therefore was necessary to accomplish the wise and benevolent purpose of Jehovah. "But woe, says he, unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed;" plainly evincing, that great would be the guilt and punishment of this traitor. This passage of scripture refers to one of the most wonderful and important events, which ever took place in our world. It may therefore suggest some interesting and useful remarks.

1. The death of Christ is an event, which has been productive of unspeakable good to the universe. It has made the clearest and brightest display of the divine character and perfections which has ever been exhibited. The wisdom of God has been wonderfully displayed in contriving the way of redemption, in which the divine law and government have been supported, sin discountenanced, and yet penitent sinners pardoned and saved. In this way the subtle devices of Satan have been defeated, and overruled to answer benevolent purposes, and good has been brought out of sin, that worst of evils.

The inflexible justice of God and his opposition to sin have been strikingly manifested in the death of the Lord Jesus. For as God spared not his well-beloved Son, when he took the place of sinners, but inflicted upon him the most dreadful sufferings; it shews his immutable justice and opposi-

tion to sin, and his fixed determination to support the authority of his law and government. The unspeakable grace and mercy of God, consisting in the exercise of goodness to the miserable and ill-deserving, have been peculiarly manifested in the infinite gift of the Saviour, in pardoning sinners through him, and making them heirs of eternal life. In these and various other ways the death of the Lord Jesus has been the means of bringing out the divine perfections to the view of creatures, and so has been conducive to the glory of God, and to the happiness of all the inhabitants of heaven. For a view of the divine perfections is one chief source of the felicity of all holy beings. The scriptures therefore teach, that "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; and that the angels desire to look into these things."

The death of Christ is also productive of infinite good, as it has been, and will be, the means of saving millions of mankind from everlasting destruction, and of introducing them into unspeakable and eternal felicity. For had it not been for the death of the Saviour, not a single individual of the human race could ever have been saved.

2. It appears, that the death of the Lord Jesus was determined or foreordained in the divine purposes. This is evident from plain declarations of sacred writ. —It was expressly predicted in the Old Testament, that the Saviour or Messiah should thus die. It is said, *Isai. liii.* "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. He was cut off out of the land

of the living. He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." And in Daniel it is declared that "the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself." Since the death of Christ was thus plainly foretold, in these and many other passages of the word of God, it certainly must have been foreordained in the counsels of the unchangeable Jehovah. Accordingly it is expressly declared by the voice of inspiration, that he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and that "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy child Jesus, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Peter also in his first epistle, speaking of being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, says, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." And in Revelation he is called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," because his death was fixed in the purposes and view of God from the beginning of the world, or from eternity. Again, it is said, that Christians were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, which plainly shews, that his death, by which they are saved, was eternally determined upon in the counsels of God. The Lord Jesus therefore declared, "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined of him." From these and other express declarations of scripture, it is evident, that the death of the Lord Jesus was foreordained in the immutable and eternal purposes of Jehovah.

Besides, since the death of Christ is a matter of such infinite

importance to the glory of God, and the eternal happiness of mankind, it is certain from reason and the divine perfections, aside from express declarations of scripture, that it must have been determined, or foreordained by the omniscient unchangeable Jehovah, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and to whom all his works are known from the beginning."

3. It appears from the sacred scriptures, that those who were concerned in bringing about the death of the Saviour, were very criminal. The great guilt of Judas in thus basely betraying his Lord and Master is evident from his own confession. His conscience filled him with such guilt and horror for his wickedness, that he brought back his thirty pieces of ill gotten silver, saying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood." The money which he received for his treachery is called "the reward of iniquity." His great wickedness is also manifest from the dreadful denunciations against him. It is declared by the Lord Jesus himself, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born." He is called "a devil, and the son of perdition." And as a token of God's awful displeasure against his peculiar wickedness, he was permitted in a fit of desparation to go and hang himself. "And falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out." These various considerations clearly prove the great guilt of Judas. It is also equally evident from the word of God, that the Jews and Pilate were very criminal in putting to death the Saviour. For it is ex-

prefly declared, that "with wicked hands they took and crucified him." The Jews are spoken of as being very criminal for being the murderers and betrayers of the *holy and just One*; and it is said, that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost for killing the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets. And Jesus said to Pilate, "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin;" shewing that Pilate was criminal in some degree for putting him to death, but that his sin was not so aggravated as that of Judas and the Jews, who delivered him up to Pilate. It is evident then from exprefs declarations of scripture, that Judas and those, who were concerned in betraying and murdering the Lord of glory were very criminal.

4. But it may be here inquired, how they could be criminal or deserving of punishment in thus bringing about the death of Christ, when it was foreordained, that he should be thus put to death?

In answer to this inquiry, it may be observed,

1st, It is certain from exprefs declarations of scripture, as well as from the divine perfections, that the death of the Lord Jesus was predetermined in the eternal counsels of the unchangeable Jehovah. And it is equally certain from the plainest declarations of God's word, that Judas, the Jews and Pilate were guilty of great wickedness in betraying and putting him to death. We cannot deny either of these propositions without flatly contradicting the most exprefs assertions of divine inspiration. Can any one who believes the holy scriptures deny, that the death of Christ was foreordained; when it is plainly declared, that he was "delivered by

the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel were gathered together against the holy child Jesus; for to do what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done?" Or can a believer of scripture deny, that those who betrayed and put him to death, were criminal or sinful; when it is exprefsly asserted, that with "wicked hands he was taken, crucified, and slain," and when Judas confessed that he had sinned in betraying innocent blood? Should it then even be allowed, that we were not able fully to discern how persons could be criminal for doing what God's hand and counsel before determined to be done; yet this would be no certain evidence, that it was not the case. For there are many truths respecting the perfections and operations of God, which are quite above our comprehension. Thus it is certain from scripture and reason, that God has existed from eternity, without any beginning or cause of his existence. Every rational mind must assent to this truth, and yet nothing can be more incomprehensible than the eternal uncaused existence of Jehovah. It is certain from scripture, that Jesus Christ was both God and man, in two distinct natures, but one person. But how the divine and human natures could be thus united in one person is quite above our comprehension. Or who can fully comprehend, how spirit can operate upon matter, or a volition of the soul move the limbs of our bodies? Supposing therefore, that we were wholly unable to comprehend how we could be criminal in doing what God had foreordained; yet it would no more

prove that this was not the case, than our being unable to comprehend God's eternity, or the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ, would be proof against these truths ; or than our being unable to see, how the soul can act upon the body, will prove, that we have no soul. But,

2d, Perhaps by candidly attending to the subject we may see, how Judas and the others concerned in the death of the Saviour were free agents and criminal in doing what "God's hand and counsel before determined to be done." Free agency or accountability implies a power of choosing as we please, and of acting as we choose. When therefore a rational person, in view of motives, voluntarily chooses any object or course of conduct, he is a free and accountable agent. And if he voluntarily pursues sinful courses to gratify his wicked temper, he is evidently criminal. To apply these observations to the present subject : Judas was not compelled to betray his Lord and Master against his choice and inclination. But he went freely, of his own accord, to the chief priests, and offered to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and he voluntarily conducted the band which seized him, to the garden, where Jesus was wont to resort. He was guilty of this base treachery for the sake of filthy lucre, or to gratify his covetous disposition. The chief priests and elders voluntarily convened to consult, how they might take Jesus, and put him to death. And they were perfectly voluntary in giving Judas the thirty pieces of silver—in sending a band to take him, and in importuning Pilate to crucify him. They thus sought his

death to gratify their envious, malicious feelings towards him. Pilate also, contrary to every principle of justice and humanity, chose to condemn and put him to death in order to please the chief priests and elders, secure the favor and stop the clamors of the multitude, and thus promote his own private, selfish interest. It is evident from these considerations, that these persons were very criminal in betraying and murdering the Lord of glory, although they thus did "what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done." For in doing it, they were free and voluntary—acted from a wicked temper and motives, and had no regard to the will or purpose of God. And although they fulfilled his purposes and predictions, yet they "meant not so ; neither did their heart think so." But they were wholly actuated by a selfish and sinful temper.

5. It may be again inquired, how it was just to consider those concerned in the death of the Lord Jesus, as criminal and deserving of punishment ; when in doing it, they brought about an event, which has been productive of so much good in promoting the glory of God and happiness of mankind.

It may be observed in answer to this, that criminality or ill-desert consists in the temper or motives from which we act, and not in the consequences, which, thro' divine interposition may flow from our actions. For instance, suppose that a physician gave a patient a dose of poison with an intention to destroy his life ; but the poison instead of destroying him was unexpectedly the means of curing him of some troublesome and dangerous disorder. In this case it is evident, that the physician would

be very criminal, and even a murderer in the sight of God, since he designed to take the life of the patient; although contrary to his intention, it proved the means of great good to him. God's overruling the murderous attempt of the physician for good, does not render his intention at all the less criminal. So although the death of Christ has been overruled for unspeakable good; yet it was contrary to the intention of those, who procured his death. They had no design to bring about this great good in promoting the glory of God, and happiness of his kingdom, but they were acting in direct opposition to these. It is evident therefore, that they were as criminal and ill-deserving, as though God had not overruled it to answer any good purposes. For his bringing good out of their wickedness, did not in the least alter their wicked temper and designs, in which their criminality consisted.

A few of the reflections, suggested by the subject, will now be briefly noticed.

1st. The subject clearly shews, that the divine decrees or foreordination are not at all inconsistent with our free agency or accountability and criminality. For the scriptures expressly declare, that Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and that in putting him to death, they "did what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done," and yet that "with wicked hands he was taken, crucified, and slain." When therefore persons object, as many do, that if God decrees or *foreordains whatsoever comes to pass*, mankind cannot be free agents or criminal for any of their conduct; they directly contradict

the scriptures, and are opposing, not merely the reasonings of men, but the plainest declarations of the word of God. If any assert, that foreordination is inconsistent with our being criminal for our wrong conduct; they go directly in the face of scripture, which declares, that with wicked hand they took and crucified the Saviour, altho' it was what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. It is certain therefore, if the bible is true, that persons may be criminal for doing what is decreed or foreordained—And those, who deny this truth, ought to take heed lest haply they be found fighting against God, and reject his counsel against themselves.

2d. The subject teaches, that God's bringing good out of the evil conduct of the wicked, and overruling all events for the promotion of his glory and the happiness of his kingdom, affords no excuse or encouragement for sin. For although God will thus cause the wrath and wickedness of man to praise him, contrary to the designs of the wicked; yet this, as already shewn, does not alter their motives and intentions, in which their criminality consists, and so cannot lessen their guilt, or afford them any excuse. The impenitent also will as certainly be punished for all their sins, as though they were not overruled for any good. For it is declared, that God will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul that doth evil"—that the Lord Jesus will take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction—that they shall receive according to the deeds done in the body, and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. It is evident therefore, that the

idea of God's overruling all things for wise and good purposes can afford no encouragement to indulge in sin, since this will not in the least lessen the guilt, danger, or punishment of the impenitent. And if any are disposed to take encouragement from it to live in sin, and to say, "Let us do evil, that good may come;" it manifests, that they are the servants of sin, in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, and in the broad road to destruction.

3d. The consideration, that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, overrules them to answer the wisest and best purposes, and will bring good out of all the evils which take place in the universe, must afford the greatest support and consolations to all the truly pious or benevolent. For amidst all the evils, troubles, confusions and darkness of the present state, they may reflect, that a God of perfect wisdom and benevolence is at the head of the universe—is carrying into execution his wise and benevolent purposes, and will render every event conducive to his glory and the best good of his universal kingdom. How calm and peaceful will such considerations render the friends of God under the most dark and threatening appearances?—Their hearts may be fixed, trusting in God. They are safe in every situation. All things in this life are working together for their good. And death will be their unspeakable gain, will remove them from every trouble and sorrow to mansions of endless peace and joy.

Finally, the subject shews the wretched, and dangerous state of the impenitent. They have no part or lot in these infinite blessings, nor any real source of comfort and support under the

evils and troubles of life, or in the trying hour of death. For they are in a state of rebellion and opposition against the infinite Jehovah—under his awful displeasure, and exposed to all the dreadful threatenings of his holy word. He can easily blast all their prospects—will disappoint their attempts against his cause and people, and overwhelm them in unspeakable and everlasting wretchedness, if they hold out in their opposition. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: but woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." It is in vain, O sinners, to contend with the Almighty by opposing his law, government, or the truths of his word. How easily can he crush you and all your feeble attempts beneath the weight of his Almighty vengeance, and sink you down to remediless perdition? "Can your heart endure, or your hands be strong; when he shall come out in judgment against you?" "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Do not destroy yourselves by standing out in your impenitence and opposition. But "Be ye reconciled unto God." "Acquaint now yourselves with him and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you."

H. E.

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*Explanation of Mark x. 31.*

"But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."

THIS is a phrase of which the divine Saviour made use, on several occasions, and with reference also to many events brought out to view, under the government of an all-wise God. It is a kind of aphorism, respect-

ing God's method of governing intelligent creatures. He, who liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and whose kingdom is from generation to generation, governs the universe in such a way, as that the pride of all human glory will be completely stained, and the benevolence of the benevolent unquestionably proved, and conspicuously manifested. This staining of the pride of human glory, and this trial of benevolence, will be brought about, among other ways, by God's causing many that are first to be last, and the last first. The Most High ruleth over all his creatures, and alloteth their respective portions. He exalteth, and he abaseth whom he will, and in whatever way he will; treating each one, at the same time, according to his character.

The following things may be noticed as illustrating the idea communicated by the Saviour in the words, proposed as the guide of our meditations in this Essay.

1. The Saviour's declaration has been most strikingly verified in the Jews. By taking a retrospective view of their history, we may see an instance of God's causing the first to be last. The children of Israel, or the nation of the Jews, descended from Jacob, the second and youngest son of Isaac. It is well known, that the eldest son, in the days of the patriarchs, enjoyed peculiar privileges and advantages, by birth. These privileges are designated in the scriptures, by the term, *birth right*. From the two sons of Isaac sprang two nations, and it was particularly foretold, that the elder should serve the younger. To this fact the apostle refers in Rom. ix. 11. 12. 13. "For

*the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* The apostle, probably, had particular reference to the two nations which sprang from these two men. In the origin of the Jews, therefore, we may see a fact which verifies the Saviour's declaration. "*The elder shall serve the younger;*" that is, the first shall be last, and the last first. In the accomplishment of this event, the pride of human glory was stained. He who held the first and most honorable rank, in human estimation, was placed by the great Governor of the world, in a situation far inferior to the younger. Compared with the children of Israel, what were the descendants of Esau? In this comparison they were a contemptible people. Let this fact be noted as one instance, where God so ordered in his providence as to make the first last, and the last first.

Following the history of the Jews from the time of their being chosen, as God's peculiar people, until their final dispersion, we shall see the same declaration verified in another way. From the calling of Abraham to the time God gave up the Jews to spiritual blindness, and rejected them from being his people, was a space of nearly two thousand years. During this long period, the Jews were exalted to heaven in point of privileges. They were singled out from all the nations of the earth to receive the favors of God. By the hand of the Most High they were led, as a tender

parent leads his child ; and by his mouth they were faithfully instructed and warned. To them were committed the oracles of God. To them solely pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. Unto them exclusively were all divine manifestations made ; and unto them were all the prophets sent. They were nourished and brought up as children, and educated in the habit of believing they were the people of God, and highly favored of the Lord. In addition to all this, by their prophets they were assured of the coming of Christ, and abundantly forewarned of the gospel day. When the Saviour appeared, he was born in the midst of them, trained up as one of their number, and finally began and completed his ministry among them. In their hearing his doctrines were delivered, and before their eyes his miracles were wrought. On them, in particular, he called ; and over them he wept. With all these advantages, it would be natural to suppose the Jews would be the first to acknowledge Christ, and to embrace his gospel. But though they were the *first* to hear the gospel, yet as a nation they have not even yet received it ; yea, they have continued in an obstinate rejection of it to this day. How mysterious is the thought, that this people should be singled out by God for the enjoyment of such privileges, for the space of nearly two thousand years, all of which pointed directly to the coming of Christ, and were preparatory to that event ; and after all, that they should reject Christ as soon as he appeared ! Individuals among the Jews, it is true, belie-

ved on Christ ; but, as a nation, they rejected and crucified him. While the gospel was a stumbling block to the Jews, it spread rapidly among the Gentiles, who had always been groping in darkness.—What shall we say to these things ? We are constrained from fact to say, that many who are *first*, or the most highly exalted in regard to privileges, may be the *last* to be benefited by them. Many who, in human view, stand the nearest to God may be the *last* to give their hearts to him. On the other hand, many whose privileges are comparatively few, who rarely have opportunities to hear the gospel, and who apparently stand at a great distance from God, may be the *first* to fall down in heart before him. These observations are, by no means, designed to encourage a neglect of the means of instruction ; but they are made to show in what light we are to view external privileges, when unaccompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit. A comparison of the state of the Jews with that of the Gentiles, at the time referred to, has very naturally led to these observations. The former were the first as privileges were respected, the first to hear the gospel, and the last to embrace it. This was correspondent with God's method of governing intelligent creatures, manifested in other cases. When the centurion came to Christ, and expressed great strength of faith, the Saviour conveyed the same idea. Matthew. viii. 11. 12. “ *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out*

into utter darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." We further read, that the Saviour came unto his own, and his own received him not ; but, at last, he was found of those who sought not after him. All these expressions, and all these facts, with respect to the Jewish nation, most strikingly illustrate the sentiment conveyed by the words, "*Many who are first shall be last ; and the last first.*"

2. We may notice the government of God displayed in this view, with respect to the rich and honorable men of the earth.

In this world, the rich and the honorable are the *first*. Here, they enjoy their good things ; here, they fare sumptuously. They have great influence, and they rule the earth. With the staff in their hands, they make the poor of the earth do much as they please. There is therefore, an obvious sense in which the rich and honorable are the first, and the poor, the last. This being admitted, the Saviour's aphorism respecting God's method of governing intelligent creatures is very naturally applied. By making this application, it is not designed to be intimated, that all the rich will hereafter be cast down below the poor. Some of the former description will, no doubt, be found among the saints in glory. Christ doth not say *all*, but *many* that are first shall be last. To apply this sentiment to the case before us, we may say, Many who, in this world, are rich and honorable shall be abased ; while many who are poor and despised shall be exalted. To illustrate this truth was one design of our Saviour in uttering the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man was first in this world,

and Lazarus was last ; and when they died, the first was last, and the last first. In hell the rich man lift up his eyes, being in torments, but Lazarus was conveyed to Abraham's bosom. On another occasion the Saviour said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !" The same thought with respect to the rich and honorable is expressed, in the scriptures, in a variety of ways. The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, says, "*Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty : And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.*" A reason is then added : "*That no flesh should glory in his presence.*" God governs his creatures in such a way, as that the pride of all human glory shall be thoroughly stained. How striking it will be to see the scale turn, with respect to many of the rich and poor, at the day of judgment ! How mortifying it will be to all human pride ! Many who are distinguished in this world for their riches and honors, will see some of their fellow-creatures, who, in their state of pilgrimage, were accustomed to bow before them, ascend to glory at the right hand of the Saviour ; while they themselves will sink down into the pit where will be ceaseless weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. In this situation, many of the rich, should they have opportunity, will beg and plead that those

on whom they now look with an eye of contempt, might be suffered to bring them a little water to cool their burning tongues. Then to their great mortification, they may realize the truth of the Saviour's words, *Many that are first shall be last*. Leaving the rich and honorable of the earth, we may notice another class to whom these words are applicable.

3. Many who are the first, as to religious zeal, may be the last as to real piety.

Some of the greatest zealots in religion may finally prove to be nothing but miserable hypocrites; while others who are not half as much celebrated for what are called religious deeds, may possess humble, broken hearts. The former have the praise of men, the latter the approbation of God. It is probable we often judge very imperfectly with respect to the characters of those who are real Christians. We may look upon persons to be the most eminent for piety, who are the least so. A great part of what we call religious zeal in ourselves and others may be nothing more than hay, wood, and stubble, which must certainly be burnt up. In God's children, there are, no doubt, different degrees of grace; and from the apparent difference in their *fruit*, we readily conclude that we *see* different degrees of grace. In regard to some, we have the strongest assurance that they are eminently pious;—of the piety of others, who, perhaps, say for less, our hopes are very faint. After all, with respect to these persons, we may, contrary to our expectation, see the scale turn. Many that *we* concluded were first may prove to be the last; and the last, first. We sometimes have opportunity to see this verified in this world; and it is prob-

able we may see much more of it, in that day when the characters of men shall be fully declared.

That the writer of this essay has not made a wrong application of the Saviour's words in this particular must be obvious to all after attending to the following verses from the 13th of Luke: "*When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But, he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*"

The Saviour then applied the same sentiment, which he so often expressed in other cases, where he was illustrating the government of God: "*And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.*"

4. These words of our Saviour may be very naturally applied to the kingdoms of this world, compared with the kingdom of Christ.

The kingdoms of this world have hitherto been great, splendid and potent, while the kingdom of Christ has been composed of comparatively few subjects, scattered here and there among the nations of the earth, at a distance from each other, feeble in their exertions, and contemptible in the eyes of the world. The king-

doms of this world have been the first, and the kingdom of Christ has been the last. Reference is now had to the number of their subjects, and to their flourishing. But we have God's word, which is infallible, to assure us that the scale will turn. We may believe, without a doubt, that the stone which was set at nought of the builders, for its contemptible appearance, will become the head of the corner. We may be assured also that the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, shall break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold; or in other words, the pomp and carnal splendor of the kingdoms of this world;—that this same stone shall grow and increase, become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. Then, in an important sense, will the first be last, and the last first. Then will the scale of God's providence turn, in such a way, as effectually to stain the pride of human glory. Had we nothing else to look at but past events, it is acknowledged, all this would appear very improbable. It would appear very improbable indeed, that the kingdoms of this world should be out-shone and swallowed up, by the small and despised kingdom of Christ. But, the improbability of this event entirely vanishes, when we turn off our eyes from things which have taken place, and look into the holy scriptures. The kingdom of the Redeemer, which is now the last, shall finally be the first. It shall grow and spread, and fill the whole earth; and not only so, it shall last forever and ever. Full to this purpose are the words of the prophet Daniel: Chap. ii. 44. "*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up*

*a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*"

Keeping this thought in mind, we shall be able to understand the nature of the comfort, which the Saviour, when on earth, administered to the few, despised men, who adhered to him. "*Fear not little flock* (said he) *for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" What comforting words! The kingdom of which he here spake is that which shall survive all other kingdoms, and which shall rise and shine, and appear with an increasing glory and beauty for an interminable duration. Christ called his flock *little*;—and it was truly small and despised; but he did not leave them without evidence, nay, without assurance, that the scale of providence should turn in their favor, and that the first should be last, and the last first.

5. We may see the Saviour's words verified, by observing the government of God with respect to the holy angels, compared with those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. The holy angels, having never fallen, have always been in a state of great honor. They have been in the presence, and in the enjoyment of God. But there are some expressions in scripture, which seem to countenance the idea, that they who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, are brought into a relation to him, nearer and dearer than even that in which the holy angels stand. The redeemed, or the church, are called, *the bride*, or *the Lamb's wife*. It does not appear that the holy angels are thus acknowledged. Can we conceive of a relation to Christ equally hon-

orable with that now mentioned? Christ calls those, who are bought by his own precious blood, and who are saved from their awful pollution by his grace, his beloved, his spouse, his jewels and his bride. These endearing titles, which, in the holy scriptures, are applied to the redeemed, to Christ's elect, are not applied to the angels. Confining our views to this order in creation, we shall readily say, the angels were first, and men were last; but on turning our attention to the holy scriptures, and viewing what has taken place in divine providence, we must acknowledge that the redeemed are more of an ultimate end with the great Creator, than the angels. God hath governed in such a way, that it plainly appears angels were made to answer ends respecting the redeemed, and, in this sense, were made for the church. The apostle intimates, that it is the business of angels to minister to that precious number from among men, which is given to Christ. Heb. i. 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* Aside from the peculiar relation to Christ into which the redeemed are brought, by his assuming their nature, and by their being purchased by his own blood, we may easily conceive, that the school, in which a sovereign God hath put them, is more instructive than that in which the holy angels are placed. The latter have not the opportunity which the former have to see into the depths of divine mercy. They have never known what it is to be *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked*. They have never known what it is to be lost and undone. No creature can know this, only by experience.

To the redeemed this knowledge has been communicated; and, in this respect, they have a greater advantage for improvement than the angels. They know, by experience, what it is to be in a lost and undone state. They know, too, what it is to be *recovered* from such a state, and what it is to be indebted to sovereign mercy. Their song will be more glorious on this account, for in anthems of praise, they will shout, *Grace, grace, forever and ever*. In some respects, at least, the Saviour's aphorism will apply in this case.

The particular view which has been taken of the divine government, in this essay, suggests the following reflections.

1. The doctrine of divine sovereignty is established by facts.—The many passages of scripture, in which this doctrine is asserted, men labor to explain away and pervert. Imagining that they have success, they triumph over the truth. But what will they do with facts? It appears, that God hath ever treated all his creatures, as being his own property, and as having a sovereign right to them. That which the church is represented to acknowledge in Isaiah lxiv. 8, "*We are the clay and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand,*" perfectly corresponds with the history of God's dealings with his creatures.

2. How vain is the wish to be celebrated for learning, wisdom or even religion! To possess these, especially religion, is desirable, yea infinitely important. But, how vain and foolish to glory in the thought of being famed in the world, for these things. Against this evil, not to mention other classes of men, the ministers of the gospel must feel it suitable, carefully and perseveringly to

watch. It is an evil into which they cannot fall without ruining their souls. It is written in the word of God—*He that exalteth himself shall be abased.* From the nature and importance of the ministerial office, it is expected that they who sustain it, will, in their knowledge of the scriptures, and in their zeal to build up the kingdom of Christ, be the *first*, or *before their hearers*. But, with all their fame for learning, wisdom and religious zeal, the time may come when some of this character will sink far below many of those, who have sought instruction from their lips. Their station, as ambassadors for Christ, may gain them honor and reverence in this world; but this will, by no means, turn to their account in the day when Christ shall make up his jewels, unless they have humble and broken hearts. It becomes all, of every age and character, to glory in the Lord and in him alone; and to submit the future size and condition of their vessel to Him, who hath a right to do what he will with his own.

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*Remarks on Matthew v. 23, 24.*

MESS'RS EDITORS,

In the first number of this volume of your Magazine, an explanation is requested, of Matt. v. 23, 24. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What is here sent you is designed, not merely as an explanation, but liberty is taken to make a variety of ob-

servations on the text, which you may publish or suppress as you please.

**I**N connection with this passage, Christ reminds his hearers, that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. Our Lord referred to the Mosaic law respecting murderers, and as he had just observed that he came not to destroy the law, he here explained this precept, as a prohibition, not only of murder, but of malice, hatred and abuse, adding, But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, that is, Thou vain fellow, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. This connection suggests, that the passage proposed for explanation, respects a trespass committed against a brother, and not only when an actual injury is done, but also when an evil passion is harbored in the heart, and forbids offering a gift unto the Lord, until one is reconciled to a brother who has any thing against him.

The *gifts*, which the Jews offered, were distinguished from *sacrifices*, by being free-will-offerings, not enjoined by law. These gifts, because not expressly commanded, were accounted by the Jews, peculiarly acceptable to God, yet the offering of these, though brought to Jerusalem, and even to the very altar, must be suspended, if there the Jew remembered that his brother had ought against him, and he must first go and be reconciled to his

brother. If those which were reputed the most acceptable sacrifices, could not be received until all malice and abuse of a brother was removed, much less might the Jews expect, that inferior acts of worship could meet with divine approbation. They knew that they might not approach the Passover, nor any holy ordinances, until every legal uncleanness was removed by the requisite purifications, and that it was particularly provided by their law, that if unclean at the time of the passover, they should keep the feast in the next succeeding month; which was calculated to teach them, that God would accept no worship, where due preparation is disregarded.

In this matter it is doubtless safe arguing from the ancient to the new dispensation, which certainly requires as much love to the brethren, and is as spiritual as the first. We may conclude, that *if men now in gospel times, would be accepted of God in acts of religious worship, they must, if they have given occasion of offence to a brother, go and be reconciled to him.*

1. It is necessary here to explain what is meant by occasion of offence.

As it respects themselves, if we have cursed or despised our brother in our hearts, or have harbored malice, envy or any evil passions and intentions against him, though we have never injured him by any open act of abuse, we are guilty in the sight of God and our own consciences.

Further, When any such evil passions and intentions have been carried into effect, a brother hath just cause of offence. Defamation, fraud, insult, abuse and injurious conduct give a brother

occasion of offence. To these may be added whatever is contrary to that charity, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and therefore if we refuse to defend the character of a brother who is defamed, to relieve him when hungry and naked, and to visit him when sick and in prison, he has according to the laws of Christ's kingdom somewhat against us. Further,

All opposition to, or trespass upon the common interests of our brethren, gives them a just occasion of offence. We cannot wound a brother so deeply, as to wound him in the common interests of the family to which he belongs, and the honor of his heavenly Father. The common interests of this family are the glory of God, and the welfare of his children.—Among the articles which belong to this interest, and contribute to these purposes, are the laws of God. These are of great importance, so much so, that the well-being of the family is inseparably connected with their honor, support and due execution. The gospel of Christ is another article of infinite value. All the doctrines of religion, and all the Christian institutions, such as the sabbath, the ministry, the sanctuary and the special ordinances, serve to enrich the family. People who honor the law by obedience, and exercise faith in Christ, and seriously love and recommend the doctrines and duties of Christianity in all respects, do not trespass against their brethren. But how can we commit a greater offence, than by striking at the root of the whole family,—breaking the commandments of God, and teaching men to do so,—rejecting the doctrines of the gospel, and substituting errors,—denying, neglecting

or trifling with divine institutions, —and serving sin? Has not our brother in this case ought against us, though we may not have injured, defrauded or abused him in particular, in any other way, than by a general opposition to Christ and his cause? And even, if unknown to mankind, we are secretly the enemies of Christ, we are really guilty of trespassing upon all his friends.

2. It cannot be improper, after having explained the nature of an offence, to notice the reasons why we must go, and be reconciled to an offended brother, if we would be accepted of God in acts of religious worship. One reason for this is, that acts of pretended worship to God, while such offences are continued in, are suspicious, if not certain evidences of vile hypocrisy, and carry the appearance of attempts to put off a counterfeit upon God. Unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thy back? Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother—These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.—Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, and give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord?—When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me: the calling of assemblies I cannot away with.

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Your new-moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Here it is plain that God rejected all worship, as being mere hypocrisy, while men lived in wickedness and trespasses against their fellow creatures. Our Saviour speaks of the Pharisees in much the same manner. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore shall ye receive the greater damnation. God cannot receive any such pretensions to devotion, because he considers them as hypocrisy. He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

Besides: Such pretended acts of worship misrepresent and dishonor religion, and are a new offence committed against the injured brother. They represent religion as a thing disconnected with morality, and consistent with the greatest wickedness towards mankind. And would not such as judge of religion, by the conduct of professors, if they generally conducted in this manner, despise and think evil of christianity? It is with the utmost propriety therefore that Christ says to such, Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Some men's devotions cost them very little, their real characters are more justly expressed in their conduct to-

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wards mankind. The Scribes and Pharisees were scrupulously exact in certain things, while within, they were like sepulchres, full of all uncleanness. They paid tythes even of herbs, and fasted often, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith.

We may also observe, that it is the duty of such as have given occasion of offence to a brother, to become forthwith reconciled to him, before they attempt any public acts of devotion, not only, as has been already shown, because such acts in these circumstances have the air of hypocrisy, are a new offence to a brother, and cannot be acceptable with God, but because it is in the nature of things, the obvious duty of the offender to make immediate satisfaction. This is one of those plain truths, which cannot reasonably be controverted, and is required by Christ, when he directs us to forgive an offending brother whenever he shall turn again saying, I repent.

3. It is now proper to enquire in what way offenders are to be reconciled to a brother.

It is very evident, that in the first place they must be reconciled in their hearts to their brother, and must banish all malice, and sinful passions, and exercise love and Christian charity towards him. If the offence has been confined to the heart, and is a perfect secret to all but God, then this, with an humble confession of our faults before God alone, is all that is required to effect a reconciliation; we can then lift up holy hands without wrath in prayer. But if our trespass has been acted out against a brother by a real abuse, then if it be possible, we are to manifest our reconciliation

to him, so that he may have evidence of it, by going to him, and confessing our faults as directed: *Confess your faults one to another.* This may indeed sometimes be impossible, our brother may be dead or gone to some unknown parts, so that we can neither go, nor write to him on the subject. In this case, there must be in the sight of God, a readiness of heart to go and give our brother due satisfaction, and nothing must be wanting, but an opportunity, and we must be humbled before God. When this takes place, we have done all that is required; for God requireth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. But what shall be done if our injured brother will not be reconciled to us, even tho' we fulfil to him all that the gospel requires? To this it should be instantly replied, that we injure our brother by entertaining such hard thoughts of him. Our Lord in the passage proposed for explanation, countenances no such suspicions; our apprehensions probably arise from our remaining prejudices against him, and show that we are not fully reconciled to him in our hearts. However, since on trial, it may so happen, that he will not accept us, then when we have with true sincerity, taken all the steps which Christian love, in the exercise of true repentance and humility, would influence us to take, the sides are changed, we are reconciled in the matter of offence, he is become the offender, we have done all that we can, all that is required; we may now attend any Christian solemnity and be accepted.

Further: Suppose our offence has been fraud, or defamation; it is needless to enlarge on the evidence, that restitution and a re-

dress of the injury, must accompany our professions of repentance.

Again : If the offence be not personal, but be committed against God, and his family, by any immorality, or opposition to truth and duty, or any denial, or abuse of the doctrines and ordinances of christianity, then public or private acknowledgment is to be made, according to the nature and publicity of the offence.

4. It may not be improper here to notice the misapplication and perversion of the words under explanation, which some have made, to justify themselves in withdrawing from the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and other acts of worship, under pretence that some brother has given them occasion to have ought against him. The words are, *If thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee*, leave there thy gift, &c. and not, *If thou hast ought against thy brother*, leave thy gift until he repents. In this case, if the directions were, as some seem to understand them, it would be in the power of an evil minded brother to prevent the whole church from all their public devotions, whenever he pleased. Satan would have every advantage he could desire to overthrow all public worship. If our brother have offended against us, and we have taken such measures as Christ prescribes, and he will not repent, and the matter be such that it cannot be proved, and so it cannot be brought before the church, and the offender be excommunicated, then we have done our duty, and there is no command or reason, why we should be debarred from the worship and ordinances of God, though the offender be present. Those who have thus perverted the direction under consideration, must have

done it, either by a gross mistake, or they have absented themselves, through a spirit, which indeed rendered them unfit to be partakers in holy ordinances.

5. The observations which have been made, must forcibly impress the importance of being exceedingly cautious, that we never give any one a just occasion of offence ; for while this is the case, we are disqualified for any public acts of devotion and Christian communion, until we have done every thing in our power to effect a reconciliation, and make satisfaction to the offended. Yea more, we cannot be accepted in our closet devotions, or in any kind of worship, until we truly repent, and are ready and desirous on the first opportunity in our power, to give full satisfaction. God will not accept any thing at our hands, while we wilfully live in a trespass against our brother.

ADELPHOS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

IF you should judge the following letter calculated to enlighten, and confirm wavering minds, you are desired to publish it in your next number.

*Directions to a Friend how to distinguish betwixt true and false doctrines in religion.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have repeatedly told me in private conversation, that your mind is greatly perplexed and stumbled, on account of the numerous different sentiments and persuasions, found amongst the professors of Christianity. You

are very anxious to know, what system of doctrines amongst them all is genuine, and if embraced will lead to salvation. I feel very desirous of giving your mind relief, on this interesting subject. But in attempting this, I shall cautiously avoid giving the preference of one denomination of Christians, to another.

It is undoubtedly true that the children of God, through the great imperfections which attend this present state, differ in regard to modes and forms of worship, and in things which may be called the non-essentials of religion, while they agree in the weightier matters. Nay, we may be assured that all sincere Christians do harmonize, in those truths which are essential to salvation. When two persons or parties differ widely in these, one or the other must be fatally erroneous!

That you may discern betwixt truth and error, in things which concern your salvation, you must get some of the leading sentiments contained in the bible, fixed in your mind, with which to compare, what you hear or read. Ask you what are those leading sentiments? I answer some of them are the following, viz.

That mankind are by nature, wholly destitute of any thing morally good—And though they are impotent, yet their impotency being of the moral kind, or consisting chiefly in opposition of their wills to God, renders them altogether criminal and inexcusable, for continuing in their disobedience to the gospel. That God therefore “*commandeth all men every where, to repent and to believe in Christ.*” And, as no one will obey this command, while he retains his love of wickedness; it is an act of sovereign grace in God,

to convert sinners, and to dispose them to embrace the offers of salvation, made to them in the gospel of Christ.

One leading sentiment of the Bible is, that the way in which God saves sinners, tends to exalt the Godhead, as the Alpha and Omega in their salvation, and to humble their pride, to strip them of their self-righteousness—to cure them of their vain boasting—and to drive them from every strong hold and refuge of lies, to Christ, the only ark of safety.

The genuine scripture sentiments tend also, to produce a benevolent temper—holiness—love—godly sorrow for sin—faith, humility—a prayerful, humble, circumspect, self-denying practice—a weanedness from the vices, vanities, and sinful pleasures of this vain world. They lead people to prize Christ and the riches of his grace, as the pearl of great price—to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to be willing to part with all their friends and possessions, yea and their own lives for his sake.

The true gospel sentiments, when cordially embraced and practised, reconcile sinners to the character of God—to his holy precepts, and to all those great mysteries, contained in his word, or in his providential dispensations. They dispose them to renounce their idols, and to chuse God for the portion and happiness of their souls, to make Christ their righteousness and strength; and to apply to him for pardon, for sanctification, and eternal redemption.

One leading doctrine of the bible is, that all the true friends and faithful followers of Jesus Christ, will be admitted to inexpressible rewards of glory and blessedness, in the coming world; and that such as die in their sinful, impeni-

tent state, will be doomed to that misery which is inconceivably dreadful, and which will be endless in duration !

Now, Sir, I request you to search the scriptures attentively, and you will find they contain those leading truths, at which, I have only very briefly hinted. And when you read or hear doctrines advanced, which correspond with these fundamental principles, you may safely embrace them, as the genuine truths of the bible. But if you hear things advanced, which tend to build up unholy sinners upon themselves,—or that hold them up to view, as possessing some virtue or some qualifications, which may recommend them to God ; when you hear them encouraged that their state is safe, short of a new heart, or an interest in Christ,—when you hear sentiments which derogate from the glory of God, or that ascribe a part of the honor of the salvation of sinners to themselves ; you ought to reject them, as altogether unscriptural, and extremely dangerous to the souls of men.

You are to follow the same rule, when you hear any doctrine taught, which tends to lessen the obligations of sinners to repent and live a holy life, or that implies a connivance at their pride of heart, or sloth, or unbelief ; or which represents that one soul of the sinful race can ever be saved, unless he experience the sanctifying grace of God in truth, and yield a cordial compliance with the gospel of Christ. You are to reject every sentiment or system, in which the guilt and inconceivable ruin of such as die in their sins, are extenuated, or held forth to be more favorable, than they are represented in the word of God. And now, my friend, I com-

mend you to that Almighty and merciful Being, who is able to lead you in the way everlasting. Be not deceived, in this day of great degeneracy and error. But see that you are well established upon the foundation of the gospel, and that you walk in the narrow way of truth and holiness, that you may at last arrive safe by divine grace, to the world of light and joy consummate.

From your's, &c.

PETROS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

SIRS,

THE following sketch of biography, is presented for your inspection ; and if you think proper may be given to the public thro' your very useful Magazine.

—“Thrice welcome death !  
That after many a painful bleeding step,  
Conducts us to our home, and lands us  
safe

On the long wish'd for shore.—

—Sure the last end  
Of the good man is peace. How calm  
his exit !

Night-dews fall not more gently to the  
ground.

Nor weary worn-out winds expire so  
soft.

Behold him in the evening tide of life,

—like the sun seems larger at his  
setting !

High in his faith and hopes, look how  
he reaches

After the prize in view ! and, like a  
bird

That's hamper'd, struggles hard to get  
away.

- - - Oh, how he longs  
To have his passport sign'd and be dis-  
miss'd !

'Tis done, and now he's happy !”

BLAIR.

A FEW particulars in the conversation and conduct of the late Col. Tracy of Lisbon,

in this state, as he drew near the close of life, may not be unworthy the attention of the public, and probably may gratify the pious and devout.

Apprehensive from the first of his complaint that it would prove mortal, he often expressed a wish to get well if it might be consistent with the divine will: But as he often said, "I have no wish to alter the divine decrees. If I know my own heart, I don't wish to live, unless I can live to the glory of God. I desire to grow in *his image*. I think I could be useful in my family, but God knows what is best. I long to be entirely prepared for his will. I beg for patience. I desire never to complain." In the same connection he also observed, "I think I have taken great pleasure in trying to support the cause of religion in society, and in my family. If I love any thing, I love religion, and good order. I feel a great deal for the rising generation. *Oh, that God would appear for his own cause.*" After his bodily disorders had reduced him so much that it was thought improper for him to attempt going to meeting, and he was desired to relinquish the proposal, he replied, "Oh, I love to go to the house of God as long as I can—I long to see the people flocking to Christ with willing minds"—and added a devout aspiration, "*Pity the nations O our God, and constrain the whole world to come.*"—I have a most ardent desire for a revival of religion in this place." The comfort which he drew from the scriptures was very noticeable—they were indeed to him the words of eternal life. On returning from a short ride a few days before his decease, he requested his wife to read to him some of the glorious

works of the Redeemer. Having Doctor Doddridge's exposition of the New-Testament by her side, she asked him if she should read in that—He replied, "I had rather hear you read the Bible: I want to hear something our Saviour did while here on earth—*some of his own words.*" She then read the xvii. chap. of St. John's gospel, with which his heart was sensibly touched, and he observed, *How good is the word of God!* and especially upon reading the 20th and 21st verses he was greatly moved and exclaimed, "*How extensive.*" Referring to Christ's prayer where he says, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. The thought that Christ's prayer extended to all his disciples even to the end of the world, was divinely comforting to him, hoping as he did, to share in some of the blessings of this prayer himself—And then on the 21st verse he observed, repeating Christ's words, "*That they also may be one in us.*" "How condescending! how kind! Christ has done all we could desire; there is nothing wanting on his part.—After a distressing night a few days before his death, he observed to his wife, "My friend, I believe the Lord is about to make a very short work with me—and I desire his will may be done in every respect. I am entirely at his disposal." He was asked whether he wished to see his children; to which he consented. But as some of them lived at a short distance, he wished to speak to his apprentices; to whom, when called, he addressed himself as follows—"There was something new, took place last night in my disorder, that I suppose will in a few hours put

an end to my life here—and I hope the Divine Spirit will accompany my soul into *the world of glory!* If you have not made your peace with God, do not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you have—do not think by and by, will do as well—You must be engaged to secure an interest in Christ—soon your probation season will be over; then all will be fixed forever; there is no possible alteration after death. I believe religion is of the greatest importance. Do read the Bible; it is given by divine inspiration. You must pray to God. I have had a great desire for the good of your souls. Do try to make your peace with God—it is worth every thing to have God for our friend. Seek first an interest in Christ, and then you will be happy, both in this world, and the world to come.” Here he felt spent, and thought he could say no more, but afterwards revived, and conversed separately with each of them. Within a week preceding his death, it was thought he conversed with nearly an hundred persons who visited him for this purpose.—He wished to see the society’s committee for supplying the pulpit, of which he was one. Being called, “he begged they would spare no pains in resettling a gospel minister in the parish as soon as possible. He longed to have the worship of God maintained constantly, and his word preached without intermission in its stated seasons. The good of Zion, and the glory of God, filled his heart; nor could he die quietly till he had put forth his last effort to promote them. In conversing with large numbers who called upon him, he used the greatest freedom, and seemed regardless of every thing but their eternal

welfare. To almost every one he put the plain question, “Have you an interest in Christ?” If the person replied in the affirmative, that he hoped he had—he would rejoin, “What are your grounds for your hope? Do be certain—do read the Bible—I know it is given by divine inspiration.” He knew that no hope was a safe one, except it arose from an absolute possession of a gracious principle in the heart, or that which the word of God describes as a foundation of hope. If the person whom he addressed replied doubtfully, and said he did not know that he had an interest in Christ, he would ask with surprise, “*Not know!! how dare you live so?*—Do make a business of it—there is no time to lose—you have an immortal soul, which must be saved or lost—Oh, do not neglect till it is too late—It is out of pure regard that I press the matter so close—Oh, how I long for the salvation of your souls, that you might know the happiness of trusting them to God, in a saving manner.” The pathetic and solemn manner in which he exhorted many who appeared rather doubtful, was deeply impressive, and no feeling mind could remain unaffected.—To some likewise who had families, he would say, “Think of your families—call them together morning and evening, and read the word of God, and pray for yourselves and them: If you do this in a sincere manner, God will bless you. You are accountable for the souls of your children—do not neglect them.—Oh! I know not how to leave begging you to get the one thing needful.” The same ardent desire for the good of souls likewise appeared in his exhortations to different characters, and in urging them to their ref-

pective duties. To some whom he believed pious, but who lived in the neglect of professing Christ openly, he addressed himself as follows: "What ground you stand upon—come forward and help support the cause of Christ—I do not say what church you shall join to; but be established in your own minds, that you join to a true church of Christ, and be not ashamed of this glorious cause." He was deeply sensible how much sin is committed by some persons hopefully pious, under the cloak of prudence and tenderness for the glory of God, and their own edification. Out of extreme caution, they will often urge as an excuse for neglecting to profess Christ publicly, that they are not absolutely certain that they are Christians, and fear if they should profess Christ before the world, they should not be able to live up to their professions. They will also urge the disorderly walk of some professors, and the state of the church as too corrupt for them to join, and the like. Although there may be some truth in all these excuses, yet the real fact too often is, that if those who make them were in a lively state of grace, they would see, that positive certainty of one's discipleship is not, nor ever was the gospel ground of a profession—that fears of living short of a profession, imply dependence on one's self, more than on Christ—and that perfect purity in churches, is not to be looked for on this side the grave, and is not necessary to real edification in communion with Christ. If the persons who make these excuses were really as tender of the glory of God as they pretend, it would seem as if their tenderness would lead them to obey him immediately; and not invent reasons for disobedience, and really dishonor him

by setting up their own judgments above his positive commands.—The probability is, they are generally much deceived with themselves, in regard to the grounds of their caution in making a profession of religion. And knowing this, the dying man, with his last breath wished either to bring them to a full compliance with the commands of Christ, or give up their hope. He therefore proceeded to urge them by saying, "It is of the utmost importance how we conduct—We must read the scriptures, and beg for divine assistance to know our duty—we *must be engaged*. The subject is not new—I have felt its importance these many years: But it is my last time with you. I have but a little time; and I wish to serve God, and do all the good I can, to the souls of my friends." His desire for doing good was universal. The day before he died, he remembered a black boy in the neighborhood, and had him called to his bedside, to give him his last and dying counsel. He conversed with all his brethren and sisters, begging them and their children to make haste to get an interest in Christ. To his aged parents he expressed himself in the most kind and grateful terms. "My heart is filled with gratitude to you for the kind care you took of me when young; for your prayers, and the religious education you gave me." He seemed to realize that his parents had been the happy means of preparing his soul for the grace of God which he afterwards enjoyed, and felt unspeakable gratitude for their exertion for his spiritual good.—In the same connection of discourse, he observed to his father, "Oh, how often have we took sweet counsel together, in walking to the house of God in company,

and enjoying the sabbath in religious worship! \*—But now, these enjoyments are over. O my dear parents! we must part—but I beg you would not mourn, for I shall be but a step before you in the enjoyments of heaven. We shall soon meet in heaven to part no more." In taking his leave of his wife and children, the scene was too tender for utterance. After reverting to the constant care and love he had exercised towards them, he closed by saying, "But now I must leave you!.....But I leave you in the hands of a merciful God; a kind Parent, who will never leave you, nor forsake you. Oh, put your trust in him, that you may be prepared for death; for that unknown world to which I am hastening. If you are careful to get an interest in Christ, we shall soon meet in heaven to part no more." He conversed with each of his children present, and gave them severally such advice as suited their ages and circumstances; and which flowed from a heart melted with parental tenderness, and the importance of their salvation. His frames of mind towards the close of life, were often bright and animating, and sometimes transporting. To a Christian neighbor he observed, "You see my situation, *just going*, and I am ready and willing. And although I have not lived as I ought, I trust that I have felt a desire for the glory of God! I

\* It may be remembered, for the encouragement of parental fidelity, that Col. Tracy early became pious, in answer to the prayers, instructions, and examples of his parents. He was a comfort and joy to them in his life and death. He was received into the church in the parish of Newent, in Lisbon, and in process of time elected Deacon in the same, and served in this office with his aged father till he died.

have longed to be conformed to his will; and now he has enabled me to give up all worldly concerns—my wife, my dear children into his hands, and I am entirely at his disposal. Oh, you do not know how good the presence of God is—it is worth every thing else: and I am going to enjoy it more perfectly, and to be company for holy angels and glorified spirits. Though unworthy, I cannot think but I shall enjoy the presence of my glorious Redeemer, and see many of my acquaintance and friends, and praise God throughout an endless eternity." At times he seemed to anticipate the delights of heaven, and realize the expression of the Apostle, "*to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" On a morning just before his decease, he observed to his wife, "O my friend, you do not know what I have enjoyed this morning.—I had such a sense of the employment of the angels and glorified spirits, that my soul was like a bird in a cage, which longs to fly away, and be at perfect liberty. It is worth more than all this world. I shall not stay here long, for my soul is so filled with heavenly joy, that this poor emaciated body cannot long contain it. Pray for me, that I may have patience until the breath leaves my body." Expressions of a similar kind fell from him at different times till he was too weak to articulate any thing audibly.—And on the 19th of March, 1803, he died, and we trust was received to the full enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Perhaps it cannot be more truly said of any one, than of this good man, that his general deportment was an happy prelude to such a death. In his temper he was naturally mild and pleasant, and dis-

posed to promote the felicity of all around him. As a child, a father, a husband, a friend and citizen he acted with singular propriety, and as a Christian was highly esteemed. Without the advantages of a public education he well deserved and he received many tokens of public confidence and respect in the offices to which he was invited—both in a civil and military line. But in no character did he so uniformly shine as that of an humble Christian.—He felt the power of religion; and manifested it, in his daily conversation and on the sabbath. He read the scriptures daily, and delighted in drawing near to God in family prayer. The sabbath was a day with him, sacredly devoted to the ordinances of the sanctuary—meditation, prayer, and praise; and the instruction of his children and servants. He was always wounded by that neglect of the duties of holy time, and loose conversation about worldly business upon the sabbath, in which many professors indulge themselves and their families. He had a tenderness of conscience about every thing in which the glory of God was concerned; and appeared really to make it an object to walk by the word of God. Such a life being the life of the righteous, naturally led to a happy death.—And who would not wish to die a death like him? Who would not wish to anticipate the joys of heaven so strongly as to soar above the terrors of death? Reader, while you confess the infinite fitness and happiness of such a life and death, what does conscience testify concerning your practice? Be so faithful as to bring the subject home to your own heart, and see whether you have chosen God for your portion; and, if not, con-

sider the madness of living so, as to arm conscience with eternal stings. But if you have delightfully engaged in such a life, be animated with the prospect that, at the moment when all things below shall appear less than nothing and vanity, compared with eternity, you may be filled with unutterable joy.

MESSRS. EDITORS OF THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE inclosed numbers are submitted to your disposal for publication, if you see fit, in the Evangelical Magazine.

*By a hearty Friend of the Institution.*

[NO. 1.]

*On Divine Light.*

“In thy light shall we see light.”

DAVID.

**A**MONG the many images and figures by which the blessed God is pleased in his word to reveal his character, and the communicable perfections of his nature, that found in the 84th Psalm is not the least striking or significant—“God is a Sun.”

This represents the communicable goodness of the Divine nature, and that God is the original and infinite fountain of all being and blessedness. All the rays of light and knowledge, of comfort and happiness, diffused through the universal system of intelligent creatures, point to God as their eternal, and inexhaustible source; as the rays of natural light, direct our eyes to the sun in the firmament. We are hence taught, that God is to good men, what the sun by its influences is to the natural world. Who is ignorant of

the high importance of the natural sun? This heavenly luminary forms our day, disperses the gloomy horrors of the night, and sheds fertility, light and joy through every part of our system. Without it all nature would be one frozen mass; neither life, nor vegetation, nor fruitfulness would appear.

As the natural sun is the fountain of light—sheds joy and gladness through the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and causes our earth to teem with all its rich variety of fruits; so the Sun of Righteousness, the true and eternal God is all this, and more than this, in his communications to his people. He imparts spiritual light to their minds—infuses joy and gladness into their hearts, and renders them fruitful in every branch of goodness.

This representation of the character of God, and the munificent and communicative goodness of his nature, we find illustrated, explained and taught by other similar passages of scripture, which seem to have a direct allusion to this figurative expression, “God is a Sun.” As in 1 John, i. 5. “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that *God is light*, and in him is no darkness at all.” Here God is spoken of, not only as that being who communicates light, but that, light is his very essence, “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.” And what follows, shews us that the sincerity of our religion, and our having communion with God, are evidenced, and to be known only by our being assimilated to that character of God, which is here expressed, and walking in that light, which he gives. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk

in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.” And hence it is that because the children of God are made the subjects of spiritual light, by the special communications of divine grace, thence becoming partakers of the divine nature, and transformed into the divine image, that they are so frequently distinguished by the title of *the children of light*; it being an expression synonymous with that of, children of God. As in Luke xvi. 8. “The children of this world are in their generation, wiser than the *children of light*.”—John xii. 36. “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be *children of light*.” Ephes. v. 8. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are *light* in the Lord, walk as *children of light*.” And in 1 Thes. v. 4. 5. “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, ye are all the *children of light*, and the children of the day—we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

With respect to the divine bounty, or the communicative goodness of God, this is a declaration of the apostle James, “Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” God is unwearied in his acts of benevolence. He is unchangeable in the communication of his goodness; as it is the essential property, and unchanging nature of the sun to emit rays, and communicate light and heat.

Saith the Psalmist, “The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear—With thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall

we see light." As it is by the light of the sun that we see the sun, as well as discern natural objects around us, and obtain an idea of light itself; so it is by the manifestations God maketh of himself by his word and works, and especially by the teachings of his Spirit, that we discover the infinite perfections of his glorious character. It is in God's light we see his glory, and learn the methods of his grace. It is by the light of his truth, we see our own characters, and discern spiritual objects. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." And, furthermore, as the rays emitted from the sun, which strike our eyes, and discover to us the splendid source from whence they take their flight, are called light; so we find, in a figurative allusion to this, all the emanations of Deity, all the means by which God displays the glory of his character, and makes himself known in the beauty of his moral perfections, are also called *light*. Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God—God manifest in the flesh,—the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person—who reveals the Father to men, and is the grand medium of all divine communications of knowledge and grace to our guilty world, is dignified with the same title, and honored with this appropriate character of the Supreme God. He is expressly styled, "the Sun of Righteousness." In the closing prophecy of the Old Testament scriptures, we read, "Unto you that hear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." This particularly respects the coming of the great Messiah, and is descriptive of his character and offices.

In the last words of David, (2. Sam. xxiii. 3. 4.) we find a remarkable prophecy of Christ, in which the same glorious character is ascribed to him. It is a most elegant description of the blessed effects of his mediatorial reign and government, in applying the saving benefits of his redemption to the children of men." The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds—as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

The first words may be rendered so as to give the true sense more clearly. "He who is to rule over men, that is, the Messiah, is just, ruling in the fear of God." The words, *must be*, in our translation, are supplied by the translators, and are not in the original; and the verb, *is*, understood in the Hebrew, should have been supplied—Thus: "He that ruleth, or is to rule, over men is just. This is evidently a prophecy concerning Christ, his church and kingdom; and though perhaps it hath a special and ultimate reference to the millennial state of the church, in which Christ is to rule, king of nations, as he is now king of saints, yet what is here asserted concerning the glory of his kingdom, is in a sense just respecting every preceding period of the Church's prosperity; and as it respects every particular soul, who is, or may be born of God, and made a subject of his grace, in this and every age of the Church. And what lively and striking figures compose this representation of Christ, and

the joy of his salvation, in the souls of his redeemed? "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grafs springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. How joyous, how delightful the scene! After a dark and tempestuous night, the morning chafes the nocturnal gloom—the sun rises clear and bright—the darkness fled—the clouds dispersed—the sky clear—the air serene and pure—the meadows dressed in vivid green—the groves vocal with chirping melody—the face of nature clothed in smiles, and every object assuming the air of joy and gladness. Yet this but feebly figures the joy of the sinner, at his first conversion, when the great Sun of Righteousness arises, and shines upon his benighted soul with the refulgent rays of his glory and redeeming love; by which the dark, blind, distressed, sin-ruined creature is brought out of darkness, even the region, and shadow of death, into marvellous light, and from an heir of hell, becomes a child of God, and a fellow citizen with the saints. O what ineffable delight, what joy and transport arise in his soul! He has "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Clothed in the robes of Christ's righteousness, the new creature rejoices in the view of moral beauty, and divine excellency. It is the bright morning of the soul. The Sun of Righteousness shines clear as the sun in the firmament, and the glory of God is reflected from every object which meets his eye. "This," saith the soul, rejoicing with the pious Psalmist, "this is all my salvation, and all my desire."

Thus, in Christ, God and the sinner meet and commune as friends. In Christ, God displays the riches of his grace, reconciling the world unto himself. In Christ the sinner is reconciled to God—receives a free, and abundant pardon—partakes of the divine nature, and enjoys the light of God's countenance. In the face of Jesus Christ the glory of God is seen, and there all the affections of believers terminate as their proper centre, and supreme object. By this vital union of heart to Christ, believers are assimilated to his moral character, and changed into his image. They receive of his fullness, and grace for grace. As the diamond becomes luminous in the sunshine, and transmits its reflected rays, with dazzling lustre; so the believer becomes like Christ, and reflects the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, in the exercise of the graces of his Spirit. And this gives us the reason why Christ ascribes the same character to his disciples which he assumes to himself, when he tells them, "Ye are the light of the world," and commands them to let this light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.—Oh, how beautiful is the light of the Christian character, thus reflecting the beams of the glorious Sun of Righteousness! How distinguishing that grace which is the portion and happiness of the true Christian! Let the saints abide in God who is light. Oh, love the blessed Saviour, and give him all the glory of his salvation. And let poor perishing sinners awake from their carnal security, and realize the guilt and wretchedness of their natural, lost, dark, and benighted state. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the

dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

ASAPH.

### Religious Intelligence.

*From the London Evangelical Magazine.*

The Christian world will derive great satisfaction from the perusal of a letter from Mr. Gerriké to a Relation; in which he gives an account of the joyful reception of the gospel, by WHOLE VILLAGES of Heathen. Mr. Gerriké is a Missionary employed in the East-Indies, by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. He succeeds the late excellent Mr. Schwartz; and appears to possess the same Missionary Spirit.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Gerriké to a relation.

*Vaparry, Jan. 18, 1803.*

SIR,

I WROTE to you last from Seringapatam; since that time I have experienced great hardships, and also singular mercies. When, in my journey, I came near to the extremity of the peninsula, I found whole villages waiting anxiously for my coming, to be further instructed and baptized.—They had got acquainted with our native priest in that country, and the Catechists and Christians; and had learned from them the catechism; which those who could write copied, to learn it themselves at their leisure. When they heard of my coming, they broke their idols to pieces, and converted their temples into Christian churches; in which I instructed and baptized them (in some about 200, in others near 300;) formed them into Christian congregations;

procured for them catechists and schoolmasters; and made them choose, in each place, four elders. These examples awakened the whole country; and when I was about to leave it, the inhabitants of many more villages sent messages to me, begging of me to remain a couple of months longer in the country; and to do in their villages the good work I had done in those of their neighbors. My situation not allowing this, I recommended them to the native priests and catechists that are there; and since that, there have been instructed and baptized 2700 people more, and eighteen more congregations have been formed. Among these new converts are several chiefs, all very zealous; and one of them travels about, preaching the gospel: but since my return, some of the Heathens of that country, old enemies, have stirred up a persecution against them, and they have written to me to return, as soon as possible; for while I was among them, all went on very smoothly; and the Heathens themselves seemed to feel a pleasure in what was going on. But it pleased God to afflict me with a fever, which began with a cold fit, which I contracted, perhaps, in the latter part of my journey, when I came thro' much rain and water in the monsoon; and from which I recover now by slow degrees. Perhaps my grief, and the many painful letters I wrote, have contributed to my illness. When I began to recover, I found a letter from that country; which I was afraid to open in my extremely weak state. It contained the good news, that the persecution had abated in several places; and that the Christians, who had been confined, had been honorably acquitted. From that time I began

to recover. The constancy of these people, under their sufferings, may overcome their enemies, and contribute greatly to the spread of the gospel in these parts. The Rev. Mr. Kohloff is willing to go into the harvest, and be for some time among them; and a very fit person he is for such a work. It requires great humility and discretion, and a mind that, by grace, has learned to be content, for the sake of Christ, with many things which are not pleasant.

Yours, &c.

W. GERRIKE.

### ORDINATIONS.

#### Ordination of Mr. Wood.

*At a Meeting of the Northern Association of Ministers in the county of Hampshire, at the Rev. Ichabod Draper's, in Amherst, May 1, A. D. 1804,—Present—Rev. Messrs. Samuel Hopkins, D. D. Justus Forward, Rufus Wells, Joseph Lyman, D. D. Solomon Williams, Enoch Hale, Joel Hayes, Ichabod Draper, Payson Williston, Elijah Gridley, Payson Munsel, Vinson Gould.—After forming, Rev. Henry Williams.*

Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D. was chosen Moderator.

A communication from the committee of the Trustees of the Hampshire Missionary Society, was read, as follows:

*Hatfield, April 23, 1804.*

To the Rev. Moderator of the Northern Association of Ministers in the county of Hampshire, to be communicated.

REV. SIR,

The Committee of the Trustees of the Hampshire Missionary Society, having invited Mr. Tho-

mas H. Wood a Licentiate of your Association to undertake a mission into the new settlements to preach the gospel to the destitute inhabitants of those settlements the ensuing season, and he having consented to labor for the Society in that service; and it being in the opinion of the committee most conducive to the success of his mission, that he should receive ordination previously to his entering on his work, the committee do therefore request the Rev. Ministers of the Association, in conjunction with Rev. John Emerson, Rev. David Parsons, D. D. and Rev. Jonathan Grout, to ordain Mr. Thomas H. Wood, if they find him qualified, to the work and office of a Minister and Evangelist in the church of Christ, at Amherst, on Wednesday the second day of May next. Wishing the presence of Christ with the Association and other Pastors of churches invited to attend this service, and asking your prayers for a divine blessing upon the labors of the Hampshire Missionary Society, we are your brethren and fellow servants in the faith and patience of Jesus.

*By order of the Committee,*

JOSEPH LYMAN.

Voted, That the Association be resolved into an Ordaining Council, in conjunction with Rev. John Emerson, Rev. David Parsons, D. D. and Rev. Jonathan Grout, for the purpose of ordaining Mr. Wood.

The Council was opened with prayer by the Moderator.

Rev. John Emerson, and Rev. Jonathan Grout, attended, and took seats in the Council.

Having examined Mr. Wood, the Council, satisfied with his qualifications,

Voted to ordain him to-morrow, at 3 o'clock, P. M. to the work and office of an Evangelist and Minister of Jesus.

Voted, That the solemnities of his ordination be introduced with prayer by Mr. Grout—that Mr. Emerson preach the sermon, Mr. Forward make the consecrating prayer, Doct. Hopkins give the charge, Mr. Hayes give the right hand of ministerial fellowship—and Mr. Wells make the concluding prayer.

May 2. At 3 o'clock, P. M. Mr. Thomas H. Wood was ordained to the office of an evangelist and Minister of Jesus Christ. The sermon was preached by Mr. Emerson, from 2 Tim. iv. 5.—“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

*A true copy, by*  
ENOCH HALE, Scribe.

On Wednesday, May 16, the Rev. Thomas Williams was ordained as an Evangelist, to labor as a Missionary in the service of the Missionary Society of Connecticut. The ordination was performed in the South Parish in Killingly, under the direction of the original Association of Windham county. The Rev. *Abel Flint*, of Hartford, made the introductory prayer; the Rev. *Walter King*, of Norwich, preached the sermon from Acts xx. 24. The Rev. *Joel Benedict*, of Plainfield, made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. *Levi Hart*, D. D. of Preston, gave the charge; the Rev. *Daniel Dow*, of Thompson, gave the Right Hand of Fellowship; and the Rev. *Eliphalet Lyman*, of Woodstock, made the concluding prayer.

*Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.*

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May.	A Lady in New-Haven,	-	10
	A female Friend of Missions,	-	2
	Calvin Ingalls, contributed in New Settlements,	4	44
	A Friend of Missions, New-Haven,	-	12
	A Stranger in the county of Windham,	-	100
	Hebron Female Association, for the Purchase of Books,	6	56
	Lady's Society, in Norwich,	-	12 75
	A Stranger in Berlin,	-	10
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